Anne Donaldson.

GIDEON,

A NEW

ORATORIO,

As it is Performed at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

The Music composed by GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL, Esq;

Written by D. Morell, and the music chiefly compiled from Handel by P. C. Smith. L.O.

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[Price One Shilling.]

GIDEON, a Judge of ISRAEL.

JOASH, his Father.

ELIAKIM, the High Priest.

A Priest of BAAL.

OREB, a Prince of MIDIAN.

CHORUS of ISRAELITES, &c.

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GIDEON,*

An ORATORIO.

PART I.

RECITATIVE.

An Israelite.

FORTH from the swarming East, for seven long years,
Has restless Midian pour'd her swarthy hosts;
And Canaan, horrid with erected spears,
Aw'd wretched Israel to her Western coasts;
With these had Amalek her Standard join'd,
The Hebrew's first and surest foe!
And now o'er all the land they flow,
Thick as the locusts in some living wind.
When Israël, with dread and famine faint,
To angry Heav'n pour'd out their deep complaint.

* Judges vi.

CHORUS.

Comfort us, O Lord, to mercy prone,
And save thy people,
Who trust in Thee alone.

RECITATIVE.

A man, a prophet, heard their mournful cry,
And thus exhorted them.—

ACCOMPANIED.

—No wonder that ye fly,
And seek in caves and rocks a dark abode,
Deserted and forsaken by your God:
Since, stubborn, for an empty idol's sake,
Your covenant with Heaven ye dar'd to break.

AIR.

Trembling with horror, while looking around,
Hopeless to live, yet fearing to die:
No longer valiant than obedient found,
Turn to your duty; and with sincerity,
Make your address before the throne;
For this will call a blessing down.

CHORUS.

Lord, in pray'r we seek thy blessing;
Jehovah, with due praise confessing,

RECI-

RECITATIVE.

Weſtward from reverend Jordan's ſilver ſtream,
Where Ophra's Mount ſalutes the morning beam;
Beneath an oak ſat Gideon, and from high,
O'er Jezreel's fertile valley caſt his eye.
Happy enough, had this been all his view;
Had he not ſeen the camp of Midian too.

ACCOMPANIED.

By doubt and ſhame, and fear, and anger preſs'd,
God who till now, he cried,
Had fought on Iſraël's ſide,
Leaves us abandon'd moſt when moſt diſtreſs'd.
And muſt it be!---and can no help be found!---
Said I, no help!---diſhoneſt ſound!—
There can,---there muſt,---there ſhall;---this galling yoke
From off our necks, at one determin'd ſtroke,
May ſtill be ſhook in fury, or by ſtrength be broke.

AIR.

Riſe with furious Emulation;
And truſt to Heav'n to guide the blow.
Let not Iſrael's choſen nation
Joy reſign for drooping woe.

RECITATIVE.

As thus he ſung; then, fix'd in ſilence, gaz'd;
Th'unfolding Heav'ns with ſtreamy brightneſs blaz'd;

He turn'd, and ſaw a youth divinely fair,
Sitting like ſome kind partner of his care.
Near him he drew with awe and fear poſſeſs'd;
When thus the heavenly viſitor him addreſs'd.

AIR.

ANGEL.

Thou light of Iſrael,---
Thy ſword o'er Midian ſhall prevail.
Thrice happy youth! ordain'd her guide!
Let faith be obedient,
And Heav'n will war on Gideon's ſide.

RECITATIVE accompanied.

Let the command ſuffice; nor reaſon's eye,
With dangerous keenneſs, ſeek the darkened Why.
All curious inquiſition muſt be ſpar'd;
And nothing ſought beyond what ſtands declar'd.
Be not too ſcrupulouſly wiſe;
Obedient faith is man's beſt ſacrifice.

RECITATIVE.

He ſaid, and gently ſtretching out his hand,
Touch'd the deſign'd repaſt with his bright wand:
When ſtrait a flame from the dry ſurface broke,
And cover'd, and conſum'd th'untaſted ſtore.
Lovely the fire roſe whirling, mix'd with ſmoke,
Folding in glorious volumes o'er and o'er;
And upward, on a curling cloud, the mounted angel bore.

Long

Long muſing with ſuſpenſe his ſervants ſtand;
When thus at laſt their wonder broke its way.

CHORUS.

Immortal God! whoſe mighty hand
Thy glorious name can beſt diſplay.

RECITATIVE.

Oreb, a Midian prince, valiant and ſtrong,
At Baal's ſhrine now made his evening ſong.

AIR.

Mighty Belus, Midian's glory!---
That proud Iſrael may adore thee,
Bow the haughty nation down.---

RECITATIVE.

This done, he with a choſen party went,
To climb the mountain, ſilent and unſpied;
That cloſe conceal'd till dawn, with dire intent,
The cohort in the craggy cliff might hide;
Till at the opening portal ruſhing in,
Surprize might force what ſiege would ſlowly win.
But Joaſh, Gideon's father, ſaw their ſpears,——
And taught experience catch'd prophetic fears:
When thus he rous'd th'unwary multitude.——

AIR.

AIR.

'Tis time, my ſons, in every breaſt
To wake the martial fire;
While all around
Againſt your peace conſpire.

RECITATIVE.

Forth from the town a mingled tumult ſwarms.——
When Gideon gave a ſign that he alone,
Would make the general hazard all his own.---
Huſh'd was the ſtorm; and Oreb ſmiling ſaw
One threat'ning Hebrew near him draw.
But ſmil'd in vain; when, by ſuperior pow'r,
Vanquiſh'd he fell.---And thus the conqueror:

TRIO.

GIDEON.

Like a bright cherub, ſome mortal befriending,
Mercy now glides from th'empyreal throne;
Hope, her wing'd herald, glad omens portending,
With joy and bleſſing this conqueſt to crown.

OREB.

Great is the victor, all rancour reſigning;
Raiſing the conquer'd with unlook'd-for joy;
To the ſweet dictates of mercy inclining,
When fate vouchſafes him the pow'r to deſtroy.

ISRAELITE.

ISRAELITE.

Thus when the night, all in darkneſs involving,
Holds for a while her diſconſolate reign;
Sol's radiant beams the thick vapours diſſolving,
Burſt through the gloom, and give day-light again.

RECITATIVE.

Then bowing mild, the generous Hebrew ſaid—
" Fortune not always favours the moſt brave:
" Had partial victory ſtill ſuſtain'd your ſide,
" She would have robb'd me of wiſh'd power to ſave;
" And you had wrong'd a Hebrew heart untried.

RECITATIVE.

Such noble ſentiments with valour join'd,
Receiv'd applauſe from every grateful mind.
When thus an Iſraelite inſpir'd the reſt:

AIR.

May kind angels ſtill attend thee,
From the realms of bliſs above;
And with bleſſings ſtill befriend thee,
Sweet reward of filial love.
Generous valour when victorious
Scorns the inſolence of power,
Makes the hero truly glorious,
And each virtue ſhine the more.

RECI-

RECITATIVE.

And thus the choral band their gratitude expreſs'd,

CHORUS.

Hail, enlivener of our cauſe !
That calls for wonder and applauſe.
So ſhall praiſe our ſongs employ,
And crown this victory with grateful joy.

END of the FIRST PART.

GIDEON,

An ORATORIO.

PART II.

RECITATIVE.

An Israelite.

TRiumphant to the town the noisy press
Return'd with shouts, the voice of good success.
The reverend elders, o'er the city gate,
Sate wisely busied in serene debate,
On questions which concern'd the good of Ophra's little state.
These finish'd; thus Eliakim, the senate's tongue,
In every listening ear, to Gideon sung.

AIR.

AIR.

How ſweet the roſe in Sharon's dale!
And ſweet the lillies of the vale!
More ſweet the incenſe of due praiſe,
That grateful minds to virtue raiſe.
Ne'er may thy blooming glory fade,
Nor feel a blaſt from envy's ſhade:
Tall as the cedar may it riſe;
And ſtill encreaſing reach the ſkies.

CHORUS.

Fear not; be bold, and proſper;
And Heaven ſhall raiſe thy name
From this bright dawn of fame
And glory.
Great Jehovah ſhall reward thee;
And immortalize thy claim
To glory.

RECITATIVE.

Th'aſſembly roſe, and the remains of day
Were in diffuſive paſtime nois'd away;
'Till night at length the rage of joy ſuppreſs'd,
And weary tumult hush'd herſelf to reſt.
But Gideon's active mind was form'd to wake;
His new-gain'd honour, and the angel's Hail,
Now ſuffer'd him no reſt to take;
But led him o'er the grounds through night's dark veil
When thus he Heav'n addreſs'd.

AIR.

Iſrael's guardian, ſole creator!
Let not idol faith prevail; Nor

Nor, O mighty Lord of Nature,
This my glorious purpoſe fail.

RECITATIVE.

Silent he march'd to the devoted grove;
His choſen few with emulation ſtrove;
Till low was laid the monarch of the wood,
An aged oak, that in the centre ſtood.
He next with zealous tranſport drew his ſword,
And cleav'd the idol image long ador'd.
On either ſide the parted godhead fell:
When, ſtartled, cried a ſon of Iſraël.

AIR.

Hark! hark!---the winds around,
With echoing ſound,
Spreading the notes of woe,
Riſing from caves below,
Pierce my ſoul with pleaſing dread.
While from the groves the dæmons preſs,
Sighing forth their ſore diſtreſs.

CHORUS.

Deſtroy theſe idols,---and henceforth new altars raiſe,
To a diviner pow'r, and more exalted praiſe.

RECITATIVE.

Gideon, preparing now the ſacrifice,
Made apt libation in the hiſſing flame;
And proſtrate bow'd to pray.---

ACCOMPANIED.

Not these imperfect rites, Lord of the Heart, despise;
Call them ablution, and let Israel's shame,
Be, from this time, for ever wash'd away.

RECITATIVE.

[*A flourish or symphony.*

He said; when strait through Heav'n loud thunder roar'd;
Confirming thus the grace the hero had implor'd.
The servants humbly to their patron kneel;
And thus their joy in transport they reveal.

AIR.

O glorious mortal, thus approv'd,
Thus by the court of Heav'n belov'd!
Ordain'd lost Israel to restore!
For Gideon's God is God alone.
No Idols could e'er appear in flame;
Or with such signs their might proclaim.
In hallow'd groves there is no pow'r,
Nor strength in sculptur'd stone.

RECITATIVE.

At morn rose Baal's priest, and scarce believ'd
Th'alarming witness which his senses bore;
Fearing, yet longing to be undeceiv'd,
He sought the grove; but now a grove no more.
And having gaz'd o'er the deserted ground,
And view'd th'accomplish'd desolation round,
Where not a remnant of his god was to be found,
He, where the senate now was met, rush'd in;
And urg'd due vengeance on the horrid sin.---

"It

" It muſt be Gideon's daring hand alone;
(He cried) who this atrocious deed hath done.---"
When Joaſh, ſlowly riſing from his ſeat,
Soft to th'impatient prieſt this anſwer made.---

ACCOMPANIED.

No more thus loud thy boiſtrous pray'r repeat.---
Heard were thy words, and ſhall be duly weigh'd.
No ſon of mine, I think, has yet been known,
Actor of any deed he dar'd not own.

TRIO.

BAAL'S PRIEST.

From the mountain's brow, ye dæmons,
Headlong hurl the monſter down,
Who your ſhrines hath thus polluted,
And your ſacred groves o'erthrow'n.

1ſt ISRAELITE.

Ceaſe your anger, ceaſe your folly,
For vain idols to contend.---
Impious, barbarous, moſt cruel!
Would you ſacrifice a friend?

2d ISRAELITE.

Why ſo frantic; why ſo furious?
In vain you ſtrive t'inſult that pow'r,
And his almighty arm defy,
With whom no pow'r can vye.---
Weak the dæmons of the land.---
No pow'r can his withſtand.---
Vain the idols you adore.

RECI-

RECITATIVE.

Here had contention drawn a crimſon flood,
And civil fury ſtain'd her face with blood:
But mild Eliakim, who cooly dar'd,
Whoſe heart at once was cautious and prepar'd,
Taught them by ſpeechleſs ſigns how madneſs err'd;
And in ſoft accents charm'd the gaping herd.

AIR.

Sons of Iſrael, let not frenzy
Thus tranſport your honeſt minds.
Frantic zeal is blind and vain:
Turn to God;
All his laws are ſure and plain:
Who there a bleſſing ſeeks, a bleſſing finds.

RECITATIVE.

The prieſt ſtill beats his breaſt, his veſtment rends,
And to the crew his idol-gods defends.
When Gideon now, returning from the plain,
Appear'd, victorious.——
To meet him, trembling at the ſight,
The tender father flies;
Tells the near danger, and with tearful eyes,
Thus the ſafe counſel of his love applies.

AIR.

Return.—Tumultuous ruin ſhun;
Behold thy father's tears, my ſon;

Nor

Nor daring, add a heavier weight,
To make him witneſs of thy dreadful fate.
Blaſt not the bleſſing unenjoy'd.---
Go, ſeek the field, by Heav'n employ'd.

RECITATIVE.

While he yet ſpake, the noiſe grew great and loud,
And riſing duſt proclaim'd the threatning croud.
Gideon obſerv'd it, and with pious care,
Thus generous interrupts his father's pray'r.

ACCOMPANIED.

" Furious revenge toils hard for fruitleſs ends:
He muſt not cannot fall, whom God defends."

RECITATIVE.

Then with high voice and aweful mein,
Thus to the crowd reproachful,—

ACCOMPANIED.

" Say whence could all this waſte of anger flow?
Did it to Baal ſuch great tranſport owe?
Why does not Baal his own foes ſubdue?
Omniſcience ſure, like his, th'Offender knew.
Raſh fools! by blind and feeble zeal betray'd!
Are men their God's protector made?---
Oh what a different and almighty Lord,
Your fathers once ador'd!
No help from earth our great Jehovah drew;
From his own hand the baleful lightnings flew.

CHO-

CHORUS.

All glory be to thee, O Lord.

RECITATIVE.

Sudden the priest of Baal, who stood near,
Felt his joints loosen, with resistless fear,
And dropt insensibly his useless spear.

The sacred twelve to the young hero press'd,
Laid on his head their hands, and his great purpose bless'd:
And thus their praise to him and Heav'n address'd.

CHORUS.

Glorious patron! glorious hero!---
The delight of Heav'n confess'd!---
Blessed be thy holy name, O Lord,
For ever bless'd.
Amen.

END of the SECOND PART.

GIDEON,

An ORATORIO.

PART III.

RECITATIVE.

BAAL's Priest to GIDEON.

MUCH I applaud, brave youth, your generous aim:
And yet beware, left ardent thirst of fame
Disguise ambition with religion's name.
Great was this God; if what we hear from you,
Be not far more traditional than true.
If some new wonder he would now unfold,
'T would more convince than all th' uncertain old.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Let Jehovah now by miracle,
Confirm his mighty pow'r;
And trembling, we will doubt no more.

RECITATIVE.

Now while the multitude attentive gaz'd,
Expectant and amaz'd;
Gideon invok'd that God, who his new hope had rais'd.

ACCOMPANIED.

" Thou ſacred, high, unutterable Name!——
If by thy ſervant's weak and worthleſs hand,
Thou wilt ſave Iſrael, and her pow'r increaſe;
Let ſhow'ry rains deſcend at thy command,
And nothing dry remain, but this ſoft fleece.

RECITATIVE.

His pray'r was heard, and with applauſive noiſe,
The People ſhout to Heav'n their raging joys.

ACCOMPANIED.

" Once more, my God, (cried Gideon) yet once more,
Indulge the varied ſigns their doubts implore.
Call off theſe rains, unfloat the delug'd ground,
And when all elſe is dry, wet let this fleece be found.

RECITATIVE.

He ſpoke, and it was ſo,——when, ſtruck with awe,
The raptur'd crowd theſe mighty wonders ſaw;
And with joint voices thus their joy expreſs'd.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Great and wondrous are thy works, O Lord.---
We truſt in thy ſalvation.
Ophra, firſt bleſs'd, ſhall bleſs thy holy land,
And happy make thy faithful choſen nation.
Amen.

RECITATIVE.

Now each rous'd ſoldier, prompt to war's alarms,
Strong, for the notic'd movement, girds his feet;
And the ſhrill ſtartling trumpet ſounds to arms.
When all, obedient to the ſignal, at their ſtandard meet.—
And Joaſh thus his ardent hopes expreſs'd.——

AIR.

Let the trumpet's ſound inviting,
With due courage all exciting,
Set the battle in array.
By the angel's voice exhorted,
By th'almighty's arm ſupported,
Gideon ſhall his power diſplay.

RECITATIVE.

Let Gideon, our undaunted hero, lead,
And Iſraël no hoſtile arms ſhall dread.

AIR.

Tho' now fall'n, diſmay'd, confounded,
And with numerous foes ſurrounded,
Dark deſigning,
And combining,
All their threatnings we deſpiſe.
On thy proweſs ſtill relying,
And with Heaven's command complying,
Thus reſpected,
And protected
Sion ſhall more glorious riſe.

RECITATIVE.

Gideon.

Thanks to my countrymen, your ready will
Demands your leader's juſt applauſe;
But the Almighty, who approves our cauſe,
In viſion bade me his behefts fulfil.—
Three hundred to ſelect, and aſk no more,
To manifeſt his all-ſufficient pow'r.

AIR.

From your idol-gods returning,
Now be brave, his power diſcerning,
Who alone rules earth and ſky,
Univerſal Lord of Nature.—
Who in numbers put their truſt,
Build weak models in the duſt:
They in vain on man rely:
He their ſchemes at pleaſure blaſting,
He, whoſe ſtrength is everlaſting.

RECI-

RECITATIVE.

Alarm'd by frequent and encreaſing ſhouts,
The ſenate ſate, till with this joyful tale,
A meſſenger arriv'd, and clear'd their doubts.

MESSENGER.

Hail, reverend fathers; and great Joaſh, hail!
Thrice happy in a matchleſs ſon,
Expreſſion fails, to tell the wonders he hath done.—
The choſen few, appointed by the Lord,
Return victorious with unblooded ſword.
Soon as their lamps diſclos'd a horrid blaze,
The Midianitiſh hoſt, with wild amaze,
Fled, and in flying, one another ſlew.
Thus fell the friendly Oreb, with his train,
And Zeb, who only war'd in thirſt of gain;
Zeba, the inſolent, and raſhly brave;
Nor could extenſive power the proud Zalmunna ſave.

AIR.

In notes of joy we hail the happy day,
That ſhews us, if we will be bleſt we may.
Heav'n, ever gracious, hath new proof diſplay'd;
His faithful ſervants ne'er ſhall want his aid.
Let not our love and earneſt care be leſs;
'Tis ours to labour, as 'tis Heaven's to bleſs.

RECITATIVE.

ISRAELITE.

Ye ſons of Iſraël---
Lend action every grateful power ye can,
Words are too weak to thank the godlike man;

Whoſe

Whoſe ardent wiſh here terminates alone,
To make the people's happineſs his own.

AIR and CHORUS.

Sing and rejoice, the hero proclaiming,
Whoſe conqueſt with glory is crown'd;
No longer the pow'r of Jehovah defaming,
With ardour his altars ſurround.

RECITATIVE.

To meet the hero mid wild triumph's noiſe,
Ungovernably wanton in their joys,
The prieſt of Baal, as he paſt along,
Leaping and dancing led the ſhouting throng,
Converted to the other, beſt extreme,
The praiſe of Iſrael's God was now their theme.

ACCOMPANIED.

BAAL'S PRIEST.

Ye ſee, that God his Iſrael ſecures;
Let Baal periſh! Gideon's God be yours.
Above all other deities,
He only rules who made the ſkies.
'Tis he, who maketh wars to ceaſe,
And bleſſeth nations with the ſweets of peace.

DUET

DUET.

Sweet Peace, from Heav'n deſcending,
Our gloomy ſorrows ending,
Here ſpread thy ſilver wings.
So ſhall harmonious pleaſure,
Still heighten every treaſure,
That plenteous comfort brings.

RECITATIVE.

ISRAELITE.

Our hearts their confidence repos'd
In God our ſtrength and ſhield;
In him we truſted and return'd,
Triumphant from the field.
To him, who made our joys complete,
'Tis juſt that we ſhould raiſe
The chearful tribute of our thanks,
And thus again reſound his praiſe.

CHORUS.

Glorious patron! glorious hero!---
The delight of Heav'n confeſs'd!---
Bleſſed be thy holy name, O Lord,
For ever bleſs'd.
Amen.

FINIS.

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